

Documents on Diplomacy: The Source

Operation Iraqi Freedom Begins A Radio Address by President Bush, March 22, 2003

Good morning. American and coalition forces have begun a concerted campaign against the regime of Saddam Hussein. In this war, our coalition is broad, more than 40 countries from across the globe. Our cause is just, the security of the nations we serve and the peace of the world. And our mission is clear, to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to end Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism, and to free the Iraqi people.

The future of peace and the hopes of the Iraqi people now depend on our fighting forces in the Middle East. They are conducting themselves in the highest traditions of the American military. They are doing their job with skill and bravery, and with the finest of allies beside them. At every stage of this conflict the world will see both the power of our military, and the honorable and decent spirit of the men and women who serve.

In this conflict, American and coalition forces face enemies who have no regard for the conventions of war or rules of morality. Iraqi officials have placed troops and equipment in civilian areas, attempting to use innocent men, women and children as shields for the dictator's army. I want Americans and all the world to know that coalition forces will make every effort to spare innocent civilians from harm.

A campaign on harsh terrain in a vast country could be longer and more difficult than some have predicted. And helping Iraqis

achieve a united, stable, and free country will require our sustained commitment. Yet, whatever is required of us, we will carry out all the duties we have accepted.

Across America this weekend, the families of our military are praying that our men and women will return safely and soon. Millions of Americans are praying with them for the safety of their loved ones and for the protection of all the innocent. Our entire nation appreciates the sacrifices made by military families, and many citizens who live near military families are showing their support in practical ways, such as by helping with child care, or home repairs. All families with loved ones serving in this war can know this: Our forces will be coming home as soon as their work is done.

Our nation entered this conflict reluctantly, yet with a clear and firm purpose. The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder. Now that conflict has come, the only way to limit its duration is to apply decisive force. This will not be a campaign of half-measures. It is a fight for the security of our nation and the peace of the world, and we will accept no outcome but victory.

Thank you for listening. ■

Source

The Council on Foreign Relations

<http://www.cfr.org/iraq/president-discusses-beginning-operation-iraqi-freedom/p18137>